

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 14, 2010

Contact:

Katie Steiger-Meister, 612-713-5317, Katie_Steiger-Meister@fws.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces Approved Endangered Species Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grants

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is pleased to announce the approval of over \$850,000 in grants under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) aimed at supporting actions and activities that protect and restore habitats for species listed or proposed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, candidate species, or other at-risk species within the Great Lakes Watershed.

The 2010 Endangered Species Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant Recipients are as follows:

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Onondaga County, NY) is granted \$60,264 for the Cicero Swamp Wildlife Management Area Eastern Massasauga Habitat Restoration. The Eastern Massasauga, a candidate species under the Endangered Species Act and listed as endangered by the State of New York, is known to occur at only two sites within New York. The Department of Environmental Conservation will enhance Massasauga habitat within Cicero Swamp by removing over-story vegetation in areas where the species has been known to occur.

Northern Illinois University (Cass County, MI) is granted \$106,036 to Address Data Gaps and Enhance Implementation of the Eastern Massasauga Species Survival Plan. Specific objectives are to obtain data on demography and phenology for a Eastern Massasauga population; improve models of extinction risk for Eastern Massasauga populations using demographic data; and enhance the Eastern Massasauga Species Survival Plan through acquisition of additional founder animals, analysis of the genetic health and structure of the captive population, and development of a web-based system of intranet institutional collaboration and internet information dissemination. These objectives will be achieved through a collaboration involving Northern Illinois University, Lincoln Park Zoo, and the Edward Lowe Foundation.

The Detroit Zoo (Oakland County, MI) is granted \$4,000 for the Conservation of the Great Lakes Piping Plover with Educational Materials. The zoo will develop a one page brochure to be distributed by piping plover monitors when they interact with the public at nesting locations. The goal is to have educational brochures available to disseminate information to visitors using, and landowners owning plover habitat, so they are aware of how their activities may affect the recovery of the piping plover. In addition, these brochures would be available in interpretive and public buildings in State Parks, local parks, Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore, and other public locations. Brochures would also be distributed to landowners within plover nesting habitat.

-MORE-

The Columbus Zoo is granted \$80,761 for Conservation Genetics of the Endangered Clubshell and Rayed Bean. Working in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio, the project's focus will include host-fish identification of the rayed bean and an investigation into potentially causative factors for absence of recruitment in the East Fork West Branch St. Joseph River population of clubshell.

Central Michigan University (Oakland County, MI) is granted \$214,252 for Population Trajectory Improvement for At-Risk Freshwater Mussels in the Great Lakes Watershed. The project will develop host fish testing and propagation facilities for state and federally endangered species including the federally endangered Northern Riffleshell and Clubshell and federal candidate Rayed Bean (*Villosa fabalis*). Efforts will also target Michigan state threatened and endangered species Snuffbox, Wavyrayed Lampmussel, Eastern Pondmussel, and Round Hickorynut. The work includes species-specific searches of streams and coastal refuges in the Great Lakes watershed for gravid females of these species, host fish testing and propagation to provide brood stock of these species for future management, augmentation at current and at historic sites throughout Michigan.

Michigan State University is granted \$135,668 for their project that extends through Indiana and Michigan, The Road to Recovery: Understanding Genetic and Host Parasite Constraints to Mitchell's Satyr Butterfly and Hine's Emerald Dragonfly Recovery. The project will complete the rangewide population genetic analysis of Mitchell's satyr butterfly and develop recommendations for appropriate recombination of populations for recovery efforts. Research will be conducted on typing *Wolbachia* strains in all current viable Mitchell's satyr populations. Since they are known to be present in 30% of all insects and due to their critical importance in survival of small populations, researchers will survey and complete genetic typing of *Wolbachia* of the federally endangered Hine's emerald dragonfly, another imperiled insect found in the Great Lakes Region.

The University of South Dakota is granted \$152,762 for Population Estimation and Preliminary Genetic Baseline Assessment for the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly in Coastal Wetlands of the Great Lakes. The project will study quantitative estimates for Hine's emerald dragonfly populations at 3-4 sites in the western Great Lakes Basin in both Michigan and Wisconsin. This information will provide a baseline for assessing the current status for the species and to evaluate the impact of future changes brought about through management actions and/or environmental changes. Additionally, combining these site estimates with results from preliminary assessments of the genetic structure of populations, the meta-population structure for the sites may be defined. This is an essential step in assessing conservation priorities for Hine's emerald dragonfly both within the Great Lakes Basin and over its entire range.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission (Erie County, PA) is granted \$63,440 for Great Lakes Piping Plover Habitat Restoration at Presque Isle State Park. The project will restore seven acres of habitat critical for the federally endangered piping plover, state endangered common tern, state threatened large St. John's Wort, and other Great Lakes beach/dune specialists at Presque Isle State Park by removing exotic, invasive species from Gull Point Natural Area. Removing invasive vegetation from the large beach pool will open high quality moist substrate foraging habitat for piping plovers and other shorebirds and also expose sand and cobble habitat needed for piping plover and common tern nesting. In addition, this restoration will promote up to 25 Plants of Special Concern identified in the Palustrine Sand Plain Community on Gull Point.

Morton Arboretum is granted \$72,817 for Using Restoration and Management to Recover Pitcher's Thistle and Improve Habitat Conditions for the Great Lakes Population of Piping Plover. The project will help meet recovery goals for the Pitcher's Thistle by increasing the size, area occupied, and viability of two restored populations of Pitcher's Thistle at Illinois Beach State Park and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The secondary objective is habitat management, which will benefit both Pitcher's Thistle and the Piping Plover by removing invasive plant species that decrease reproductive potential of these species. These objectives are complementary because the restored thistle populations occur in designated critical habitat for the piping plover. This work will contribute to delisting of the Federal Threatened Pitcher's Thistle, and increase reproduction and population size of the Federal Endangered Great Lakes population of the Piping Plover.

-MORE-

The grants were awarded under the Great Lakes Basin Endangered Species Recovery Initiative, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a Department of the Interior agency. The grants were funded by the President's 2010 Budget which provided \$475 million for the Environmental Protection Agency –led, interagency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. For more information on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service activities related specifically to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, please visit www.fws.gov/GLRI .

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov .

-FWS-